

March 1, 2024

Dear St. Mary's Parish Team,

Greetings! I hope this message finds you all well. It's truly remarkable how swiftly three years have passed. As we step into a new cycle of ensuring a safe environment within our diocese, I wish to ensure that everyone is fully informed of the mandatory requirements to be fulfilled by July 1, 2024. If you hold a leadership role within any ministry, I kindly request that you furnish us with an updated list of volunteers assisting in your ministry for our records.

Outlined below are the essential safe environment requirements mandated by the diocese:

Background Check valid from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2027: The cornerstone of a safe environment, background checks are imperative. Attached herewith is the requisite form, along with a request for a copy of your driver's license. This step is compulsory before engaging in any form of employment or ministry within our community.

Code of Conduct: The Diocese of Springfield's Code of Conduct delineates the standards for appropriate behavior within our community. You may either read and acknowledge it within your Virtus account or submit a hard copy to our parish office for onward transmission to the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance (OSEVA). This acknowledgment is required only once in Virtus.

Plan to Protect God's Children valid from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2027: This comprehensive program, inclusive of the vulnerable adult combo, is designed to educate and empower individuals to identify signs of sexual abuse and respond appropriately. To fulfill this requirement, please complete the module in your Virtus account. If you do not have an account, you can create one at virtusonline.org. The recertification module is also accessible online through your Virtus account under "Current Training."

All individuals who were compliant up to December 31, 2023, have until June 30, 2024, to complete the CORI and recertification online module. Those who have yet to fulfill any requirements must do so and have a CORI approved by or before their first day of ministry. Regardless of when you last completed these requirements, it is imperative that everyone certifies or recertifies for this safe environment cycle by July 1, 2024. Your commitment to meeting these requirements is paramount in ensuring a secure and hospitable environment for all.

Please complete the attached CORI form and submit it along with a copy of your Driver's License to either this email (stmaryleechildadvocate@gmail.com) or send it to the Rectory, attention Brenda Bianco. Should you have any queries or require assistance, please feel free to contact me via email at stmaryleechildadvocate@gmail.com or by phone at (413) 281-5425. If I am unable to take your call, please leave a voicemail, and I will endeavor to get back to you at my earliest convenience.

We deeply value your dedication to the well-being of our church community and your invaluable contributions to your respective ministries. Thank you for prioritizing the safety and welfare of all our members, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

Warm regards,

Brenda Bianco

St. Mary's Parish Safe Environment Coordinator